UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

Friday, January 9, 2026

People are starting to notice

From Pasadena Now: *UCLA's athletic department is running an enormous debt according to a letter sent from the Academic Senate to college leaders. Last year, the university fronted the athletics department $30 million to help cover an $80 million shortfall, according to media reports. According to a May 23 letter obtained by Pasadena Now, and addressed to Chancellor Julio Frenk and Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Darnell Hunt, Senate Chair Kathy Bawn, UCLA Athletics has operated at a deficit for six consecutive years, accumulating $219 million in losses while the campus has imposed hiring freezes, weighed cuts to teaching assistants and warned faculty that terminated federal research grants will not be backstopped by the university...*

The letter from the Academic Senate said continued financial support for the beleaguered athletics program is undermining the university's academic mission at a time of deepening budget cuts. The letter states that in 2024, UCLA Athletics generated roughly $100 million in revenue while incurring $180 million in expenses. The resulting $80 million deficit was partially offset by a $30 million subsidy from the campus budget.

Despite the red ink, the Senate said athletics spending has continued to rise. UCLA Athletics is expected to face an additional $22 million in costs in 2025 related to settlements in class-action lawsuits against the NCAA, while anticipated Big Ten media rights revenue of $60 million to $75 million will not be enough to offset current spending levels, according to the letter...

The Senate criticized executive compensation and recent administrative hires within athletics, noting that the athletics department has not posted a balanced budget during Jarmond's tenure,

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

- Fight for the Future of Higher Education: Academic Freedom from the Classroom to the Clinic
- Our Concerns Over Revisions to APMs 15 and 16
- Fight for the Future of Higher Ed Town Hall
- Letter from AAUP to UC Objecting to Trellix
- Judge rules Trump demands of UCLA must be made public

Remaking the University

- Minneapolis Lessons for Higher Education - 1/31/2026
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- UC-AFT

Topics

and noted [UCLA Athletic Director] Jarmond recently received a contract upgrade with a salary exceeding $1.5 million annually... The Senate called for an immediate end to campus subsidies for athletics, including loans, and renewed demands for greater faculty consultation on budget decisions.

Full story at https://pasadenanow.com/main/ucla-athletics-reportedly-facing-enormous-debt-amid-effort-to-leave-rose-bowl-and-campus-budget-cuts.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:35 AM No comments:

Labels: athletics, UCLA

Today Is Budget Day

The governor will be unveiling his constitutionally-required proposal for the 2026-27 state budget later today. Yours truly is otherwise occupied this morning but he will provide some analysis in due course. As blog readers will know, there will later be analysis of the proposal by the Legislative Analyst's Office, hearings at the legislature, and another revised gubernatorial proposal in mid-May. Typically, after the May Revise, the governor and Democratic legislative leaders work out a deal so that a new budget can be in place by July 1.

One question is whether the governor will actually orally present the budget or just send it to the legislature and leave it to his budget director to make the oral presentation. That format would be a break from past practice but is suggested by a news release from the governor's office:

SACRAMENTO — California Director of Finance Joe Stephenshaw will hold a media briefing to provide details of Governor Gavin Newsom's 2026-27 state budget proposal, which will be transmitted to the Legislature on Friday.
WHEN: Friday, January 9 at approximately 10 a.m.
LOCATION: State Capitol Annex Swing Space
LIVESTREAM: The Governor's YouTube page: https://www.youtube.com/@cagovernor

Full release at https://www.gov.ca.gov/2026/01/06/this-week-state-finance-director-to-hold-media-briefing-on-governor-newsoms-2026-27-budget/.

In the past, the governor has presented his budget in a (very) long presentation, then takes questions from reporters, and then turns the affair over to his budget director.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: governor, LAO, legislature, politics, State Budget

Straws in the Wind - Part 217

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Former UCLA Law Dean Named Head of Columbia

From the LA Times: *When prospective Caltech students applied in the fall for early admission, some faced a new, technologically advanced step in the selection process at one of the nation's most prestigious universities. High schoolers who submitted research projects appeared on video and were interviewed by an artificial intelligence-powered voice that peppered them with questions about their papers and experiments, akin to a dissertation defense. The video-recorded exchanges were then reviewed by humans — faculty and admissions officers — who also evaluated test scores, transcripts, personal statements...*

Virginia Tech debuted an AI-powered essay reader in the fall. The college expects it will be able to inform students of admissions decisions a month sooner than usual, in late January, because of the tool's help sorting tens of thousands of applications...

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill faced a barrage of negative feedback from applicants, parents and students after its student newspaper, the Daily Tar Heel, reported in January that the school was using AI to evaluate the grammar and writing style of applicants' essays...

Georgia Tech is rolling out an AI tool to review the college transcripts of transfer students, replacing the need for staff to enter each course manually into a database...

Some of the most popular and prestigious colleges in California have so far eschewed AI in admission evaluations.

USC, which received 83,500 applications in the last undergraduate admissions cycle, has dozens of full-time readers who work tens of thousands of hours to pore over grades, essays and other application elements. At UCLA, the most applied-to campus in the nation with more than 145,000 first-year applicants, a team of more than 300 readers handles the workload. Each student is evaluated twice by two people, typically high school counselors and retired high school counselors who are specially trained...

Full story at https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2026-01-02/ai-may-be-scoring-your-college-admissions-essay.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: admissions, CalTech, U of North Carolina, UCLA, USC, Virgina Tech

Yesterday's State of the State: Little Concrete on Higher Ed

Yours truly watched the State of the State address of the governor to the legislature (because you probably don't want to spend almost an hour doing so). There was little more said than occurred in the news release that we noted yesterday about the governor's plan to consolidate state education policy.

The governor had nice things to say about UC - Nobel prizes, etc. - but, again, said nothing about the what his budget proposal will contain. He did note, as blog readers will know,

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New Anderson Dean
No Retroactive Pension Payments for Delayed Filings

that state revenues were up compared to the forecast made last June when the current budget was enacted.

Since this was the governor's last State of the State, most of it was devoted to past accomplishments with promises of good things to come.

You can see the State of the State at the link below. The governor's remarks begin around minute 37.

https://ia800106.us.archive.org/0/items/newsom-1-1-2026-new-year/newsom%201-8-2026%20State%20of%20the%20State%20address.mp4.

Republican response at:

https://ia600106.us.archive.org/0/items/newsom-1-1-2026-new-year/Republican%20response%20to%20State%20of%20the%20State%201-8-2026.mp4.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:15 AM No comments:

Labels: governor, politics, State Budget, UC, UC budget crisis

Thursday, January 8, 2026

All in 30 Minutes - Part 5

For the record, the Regents had another of their 30-minute, closed-door meetings on Tuesday to discuss the ongoing conflict with the federal government:

Because the membership of the Advisory Group on Research and Programs Funding Legal Issues ("Advisory Group") includes five members of the Regents' Governance Committee, there exists the potential for having present a quorum of a Regents' Committee when the advisory committee meets. This notice of meeting is served in order to comply fully with pertinent open meeting laws. On Tuesday, January 6, 2026, there will be a Closed Session, Special Meeting of the Regents' Governance Committee concurrent with the Advisory Group to discuss Research and Programs Funding Legal Issues (Closed Session Statute

Citation: Litigation [Education Code section 92032(b)(5)].) The meeting will convene at 4:00 p.m. at 1111 Franklin Street, Oakland and adjourn at approximately 4:30 p.m. (Advisory Group members: Regents Anguiano, Cohen, Hernandez, Leib, Matosantos, Milliken, Reilly, Robinson, Sarris, and Sures)

Source: https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/regmeet/jan26/meeting-notice_federal-january-6-2026.pdf.

One can speculate that the brief time duration for this sequence of meetings is because nothing has really happened and the meetings are just check-ins. But since they are closed-door, it's just speculation.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 8:49 AM No comments:

Labels: politics, UC Regents

State of the State Due Today - Update

Our earlier post today noted that the governor's State of the State message will be delivered this morning. Apparently, the event will occur around 10:30 AM.

The governor has put out a news release excerpted below dealing with education including higher ed:

Governor Gavin Newsom today announced a new education governance proposal that will be a key initiative in his 2026-27 State Budget. The plan would implement long-standing recommendations to strengthen California's governance system.

"California can no longer postpone reforms that have been recommended regularly for a century. So we are going to modernize the governance system by unifying the policy-making State Board with the Department of Education that implements those policies. And we're

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empowering the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to help align our education policies from early childhood through college. These critical reforms will bring greater accountability, clarity, and coherence to how we serve our students and schools."

This year's budget proposes to implement recommendations of the Legislature's 2002 report, California's Master Plan for Education, to move oversight of the California Department of Education and ultimate responsibility for state oversight and support of local educational agencies under the State Board of Education.

The Legislature's report describes California's K-12 education system as being governed by a fragmented set of entities with overlapping roles that sometimes operate in conflict with one another, to the detriment of educational services offered to students.

This concern, first raised by the Legislature in 1920 and echoed in succeeding legislative policy documents and research reports, was reinforced in a December 2025 report from Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) that concluded, "California can no longer postpone reforms that have been overdue for a century."

The Governor's budget further proposes to expand and strengthen the State Superintendent of Public Instruction's ability to foster coordination and alignment of state education policies from early childhood through postsecondary education.

These changes can be accomplished through statute, and consistent with decades of expert recommendations and recent calls for action, will strengthen governance of California's education system to provide coherence and meaningful accountability for addressing the needs of students, parents, teachers, school staff, and administrators...

Full release at https://www.gov.ca.gov/2026/01/08/as-part-of-the-2026-27-budget-proposal-governor-newsom-proposes-improving-state-education-governance/.

We will have to see what all of this entails.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 8:13 AM No comments:

Labels: governor, legislature, politics

I think I can use "entourage" in a sentence

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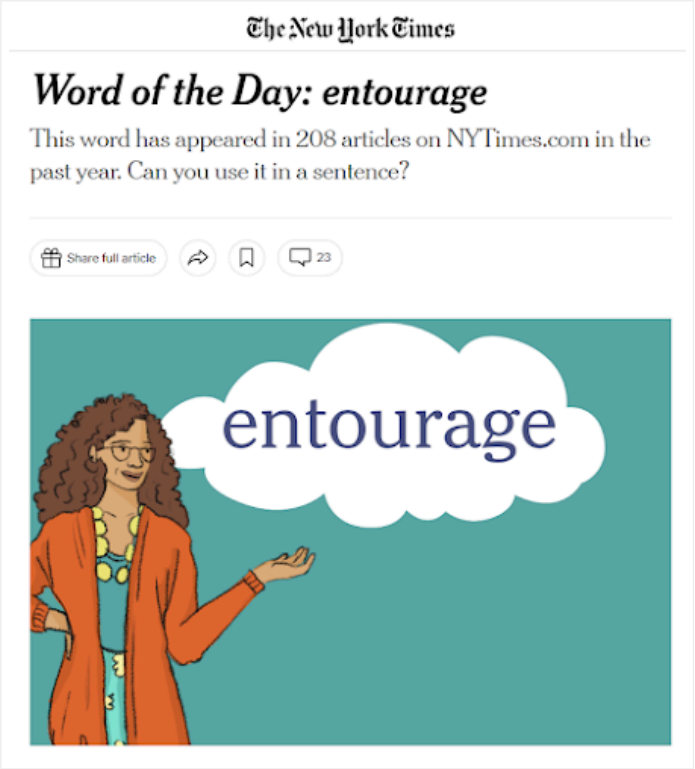
The New York Times
Word of the Day: entourage
This word has appeared in 208 articles on NYTimes.com in the past year. Can you use it in a sentence?
Share full article
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entourage

From the LA Times: *Bob Chesney's initial UCLA football staff is going to have a familiar feel to anyone who follows James Madison. After hiring offensive coordinator Dean Kennedy and defensive coordinator Colin Hitschler, the new Bruins coach also is bringing along five other assistants who helped the Dukes reach the College Football Playoff: offensive line coach and run game coordinator Chris Smith, cornerbacks coach Eddie Whitley Jr., safeties coach Anthony DiMichele, defensive line coach Sam Daniels and special teams coordinator and tight ends coach Drew Canan. While most of the assistants will retain their titles, Whitley now will coach defensive backs and Daniels defensive ends with the Bruins...*

Full story at https://www.latimes.com/sports/ucla/story/2026-01-02/bob-chesney-assistants-with-him-from-jmu-to-ucla.

So, my sentence would be:

How much is this entourage going to cost?

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: athletics, UCLA

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